

Milan Bridge Task Force Development

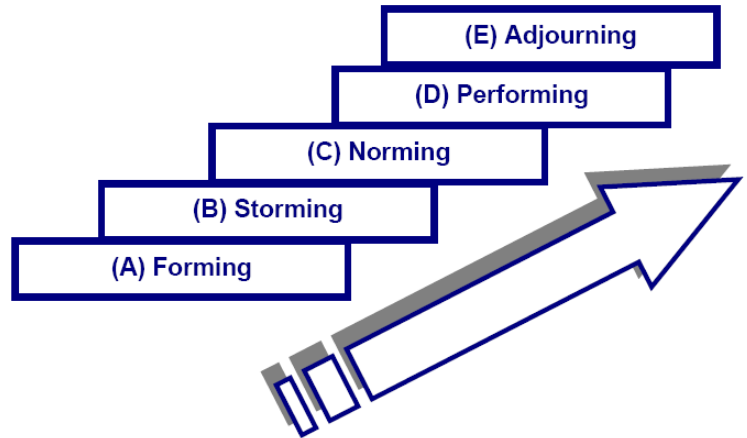
November 5, 2015

10:30 am – 12:30 pm

Facilitator's (Phil) Notes –Great Meeting!

The taskforce group began to engage in the storming and norming phases of group development. Genuine trust develops slowly as the group focuses on getting assessments completed.

The initial technique for assessing concerns seemed to work well and focus the group on the future. A fully autonomous group is an ideal goal for any facilitator, however I think this taskforce still needs some structure if it wants to enter into a performing stage to develop recommendations. I am hopeful that the broadened “concern level “ approach can be a norm for the group that will help them get into the performing phase and getting to recommendations.



Thanks again for the patience of stakeholders that have been analyzing this project for quite some time. At times, participants may want to jump to solutions, or forecast what the outcome will be without giving the process a chance. However, it is critical that everyone comes along and learns new ideas at the same pace for the group development process to work efficiently. Some stakeholders are likely in different places, and this is why making a stakeholder driven recommendation can be confusing. As we move forward, it still might be helpful for some “role playing”, and to have taskforce members put themselves in the “shoes” of other stakeholders whom have different responsibilities.

At the next meeting, we will continue to share information through a discussion style for the most part, and dig deeper into areas of potential concern. It was a pleasure working with everyone yesterday and I am excited to be part of the discussions. Also, thank you for following all the ground rules! Still feeling encouraged! Nice work everyone!

With Respect,

Phil

763-270-3461

Meeting Minutes

Phil Barnes re-introduced himself as a professional facilitator and his role as an independent “neutral” in the process. Phil then reviewed several concepts including:

- **Taskforce Ground Rules**
- **Vision Statement for the Milan Bridge Project:** *The Milan Bridge Project was a success because it enhanced public safety, improved recreational opportunities, addressed historical and environmental concerns, while supporting the local economy through developing the structure in a timely and collaborative manner that met the transportation needs of the local community while efficiently using public dollars.*

Phil then discussed the stages of group development, and suggested that the taskforce will likely do some “storming” at today’s meeting. Phil discussed that he has heard that some members do not fully trust the process yet, and trust is difficult to manufacture by the use of a short-term structure or planned process. Genuine trust develops slowly as the group focuses on getting assessments and recommendations completed. Phil recommended that the taskforce not recommend the use of artificial techniques to try and accomplish trust as a goal for this taskforce, and will focus on facilitating the groups own struggle towards earned trust. **Phil suggested that true trust has 3 elements that most people in this room have, including:**

- **Good Intent**
- **Integrity**
- **Capabilities**

Phil mentioned that if we see the group struggling with the initial technique at this meeting that we can change the process. He mentioned that the group needs to move forward at an appropriate rate of the entire group and we all need to understand ramifications of recommendations. Phil reminded everyone that the process has 3 major steps remaining, including:

- 1. Develop Broad Options**
- 2. Identify and Prioritized Top Problems, or Risks, within Both Options**
- 3. Develop Reasonable Strategies for Final Recommendations**

Phil also suggested that there is no crystal ball and that we will be assessing the future ramifications of recommendation scenarios, while understanding that there will be some level of uncertainty. He ensured everyone that uncertainty is OK about our project, and it indicates that we may need more information. Phil also pointed out that it’s good to know where we need information, or have uncertainty, and this should be seen as positive realization.

Phil suggested that a goal is that members try to learn from technical experts and have some “openness” to their perspectives. He mentioned that it will become clear where disagreements exist around concerns, and what areas of concern matter moving forward. Role playing appeared to be a good technique and suggestion, it’s safe to say

there are shared interests, and however stakeholders are weighing them differently. Phil suggested that the goal for tonight is to listen and learn about others perspectives.

Phil asked that participants follow the ground rules to make discussions respectful. Phil introduced the group to the “concern register” where he will be taking notes to document decisions and judgements made by the group.

The group then discussed the different broad recommendation options that could be evaluated. There was a brief discussion about limiting the options. Phil suggested that there are realistically an infinite number of options, and ultimately options could become overly detailed for this taskforce. The goal of using options will be to try and focus on the best broad direction. The two options or “scenarios” will help us facilitate discussions, and may not be the end result. Phil suggested 2 options that appeared reasonable to the taskforce that included a “rehab” project and a “new” project. Task members’ then redirected Phil to label options “rehab” and “replacement”.

With some confusion, Phil asked the group to define what these terms meant and suggested that words are powerful. Phil restated the question and asked what assumptions that they were holding about these options.

A “replacement” project is:

- **Proposed change**
- **Wider bridge**
- **Safer than existing**
- **Meets needs of people**

A “rehab” project is:

- **New Bridge Deck**
- **Safer from structure deterioration**
- **No Load Posting**

Phil then started a discussion about how the group will talk about concerns within each option. Phil read a list of concerns that he created from an exercise from the previous meeting and added several more concerns to the list. **Phil then went through how these concerns will be evaluated by asking 3 main questions:**

- 1. What objective information do we have, and do we need more?**
- 2. How likely is this concern going to become a problem?**
- 3. How impactful will this problem be on our vision of project success?**

The following table reflects the concern levels documented for each option and notes from Phil on the discussion:

<u>Concern Area</u>	<u>"Rehab"</u> <u>Concern Level</u>	<u>"Replacement"</u> <u>Concern Level</u>	<u>Facilitator's Notes on Discussion</u>
Losing Funding	Low	Low	With either option, losing funding is not a concern. MnDOT staff made clear that bonding dollars (2.8 million) available will expire in 2018. Rehab there is less risk for losing funds, but the Rehab option will not meet the vision of success. The reconstruction project would require timeline extension due to required project delivery processes and make losing funding likely; however this is acceptable to participants. Group has a long-term vision for the project and community.
Safety for Vehicles	Moderate	Low	Safety data was introduced that showed low crash rates in recent history (10 years). Participants argued that its recent data and there should be a focus on the risk of accidents. From a user perspective, it feels dangerous and does not appear to meet modern standards for functionality. The "rehab" option was labeled a "moderate concern" after accounting for present data and potential risks for crashes. It was testified that a fatal crash has happened on the bridge but it was before the data collection efforts. It was also noted that "potential safety risk" has been a reasoning used by MnDOT in the past. Snow and weather is a large problem crossing the entire causeway.
Pedestrian Safety	High	High	With a wider bridge, speed across the bridge will likely increase that could result in pedestrian safety issues. Likewise the "rehab" option still is a high concern because of the level of "fishing" and recreational activities off and around the bridge. The "big abutments" conceal fisherman, however there is no data on pedestrian problems on the bridge. It was acknowledged that these concerns could be managed with design features, and that it will be a big issue with either option because of all the recreation in the area.

Local Economy Impacts to Load Capacity	Low	Low	Rehab and reconstruction both take care of current load capacity concerns.
Local Economy Impacts due to Size Constraints	High	Low	Detours can be up to 120 miles because of the large load routes. Width issues with combines, homes, and other items that don't fit. Although data does not exist, truckers testified that "beet trucks" are challenged crossing at the same time.

Phil then had "open agenda" time for people to have discussions outside of the process structure. Discussions centered around how the District and Central Office at MnDOT work together, and the suggestion that Central Office is pushing the "rehab" option. Rep. Miller discussed that the process is good, and that we are here to "land the plane" and move a direction forward. He is willing to fight for the plane to land where he wants it too (replacement). Phil mentioned that his role is develop an objective report for MnDOT, and that participants should go into the recommendation choice being very clear about the potential risks that come along with that decision. Phil also reminded participants to focus on the future and not past mistakes. Others mentioned that some stakeholders were not in attendance. Al Juhnke (Al Franken Office), mentioned that he could help get people here to participate if needed. Some mentioned that they can't be at all meetings, but will look forward to using the final report to help move the project forward.

Meeting Adjourned Early @ 12:30pm